
JOURNAL

OF THE

RHODEISLAND INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION.

The JOURNAL OF THE RHODE-ISLAND INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION will be published on the 1st and 15th of every month, until a volume is completed by the publication of twelve numbers.

Each number will contain at least sixteen pages in octavo form : and in addition, from time to time, an EXTRA will be published, containing official circulars, notices of school meetings, and communications respecting individual schools, and improvements in education generally ; and one of a series of "*Educational Tracts*," devoted to the discussion of important topics, in some one department of popular education.

The volume, including the EXTRAS and "*Educational Tracts*," will constitute at least three hundred pages, and will be furnished for fifty cents for a single copy ; or for three dollars for ten copies sent in a single package ; and at the same rate for any larger number sent in the same way.

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HENRY BARNARD, Commissioner of Public Schools, Editor.

THOMAS C. HARTSHORN, Business Agent.

POVIDENCE, Nov. 6, 1845.

PROGRESS OF EDUCATION IN OTHER STATES.

CONNECTICUT.

We shall close our notice of the progress of education in other states, by extracts from the

Annual Report of the Superintendent of Common Schools of Connecticut for 1846.

This document makes a pamphlet of two hundred pages, and besides the Report of the Superintendent (Hon. Seth P. Beers, who is also Commissioner of the School Fund,) contains an abstract of the statistical information returned by the school visitors, and extracts from the reports of the same committees on the condition and improvement of the common schools in their respective towns. In the appendix there is printed the Essay, by Rev. Noah Porter, jr., which received the premium of \$100, offered by James M. Bunce, Esq., of Hartford, "*for the best Essay on the improvement of the Common Schools of Connecticut.*" We hope to be able to send a copy of this Essay to the subscribers of the Journal.

From the extracts which follow, it will be seen, that the common schools of Connecticut labor under the same class of evils, which are known to exist in Rhode Island, and that the same remedies for them

are suggested in Connecticut, which are already in operation in this State. We have no hesitation in saying, that Rhode Island, by continuing in steady and vigorous operation the measures which have been prosecuted thus far, will have, in five years, a better system of public instruction in *every town*, than Connecticut ever had, or ever will have, unless great changes in the present organization and administration of her system are made.

EXTRACTS FROM REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT.

According to the enumeration taken in August 1845, as returned to the office of the Comptroller by the committees of the several school societies, there are in the State 85,275 children between the ages of 4 and 16 years, the ordinary but not exclusive subjects of Common School instruction. These children are distributed through 144 towns, which are divided into 215 school societies, and these are again subdivided into 1644 school districts.

Although made the depositories of the United States surplus fund, one-half of the annual income of which fund is by law appropriated to the support of Common Schools, the towns as such have not been recognized in the organization of our school system since 1796. Since that date, and particularly since 1800, the general supervision of the schools has been exercised by school societies, whose territorial limits are sometimes co-extensive with the limits of the towns whose name they bear, but more frequently embrace only portions of a town, and sometimes parts of two or more towns. The local management of the schools, by the act of 1839, passed into the immediate care of the inhabitants of school districts, which were by that act clothed with new powers for this purpose.

The 1644 school districts differ from each other in respect to territorial extent, population, wealth, and particularly in the number of children between the ages of 4 and 16 years, which decides practically, in most cases, the ability of the district to maintain a school, as the number of children between the above ages constitutes the basis on which the income of the School Fund is apportioned among the school districts. By reference to the appendix, (document B.) it will be seen that while there is an average of 51 children to each of the 1644 districts, there are 41 districts with an aggregate of only 189 children, or an average less than 5 children to each district, and 96 districts with an aggregate of over 23,000 children, or an average of more than 240 children to each district.

The following is a condensed view of the condition of the Common Schools in 175 school societies, including 1351 districts, as presented in the reports of the school visitors.

The average attendance of children of all ages in the Common

Schools in the summer of 1845 was 43,748, and in the winter of 1845-6 was 34,725. The whole number of children between the ages of 4 and 16 in the same societies was 71,196. Making due allowance for the attendance of children of 4 years of age and under, in the summer, and those over 16 years of age, in the winter, the returns would show that a little more than one-half the children upon whom the school money is drawn, attend the Common Schools in winter, and less than that number attend in the summer.

The number of children of all ages, in the same societies, who attend private schools of different grades, is 6,402.

The number of children between the ages of 4 and 16, in 100 societies, returned as in no school public or private, during the year, was 4,345. Most of this number, it is presumed, have attended school in former years, and others it is to be hoped will attend hereafter.

The average length of time the schools were kept, is returned as four months and one-quarter in winter, and four months and two-thirds in summer, or for a period of about nine months during the year.

The whole number of teachers employed in the 1,351 districts in the winter schools was 1,413; or 1,075 males, and 338 females.

The whole number of teachers employed in the summer schools was 1,300; or 123 males, and 1,177 females.

The average monthly wages paid to male teachers was \$15.42, and to female teachers \$6.86, exclusive of board. The average wages paid to male teachers in the country districts would be reduced by excluding from the computation the wages paid to male teachers in the cities and large villages.

Of 1,085 teachers, 911 are returned as "boarding round" among the families of the scholars, and 174 as boarding themselves.

Out of 1,200 school houses respecting which any information is given, 74 are returned as in *very good* condition; 512 as in *good* condition; 344 in *ordinary* condition; 169 in *bad* condition; and 101 in *very bad* condition.

In 304 districts, 80 of the school houses are returned as being provided with necessary out-houses, and 224 are unprovided. Those which are provided, are returned as in a very bad condition.

In 151 school societies, from which returns have been made on this point, there are upwards of 215 different authors or text books in the several studies pursued, viz:

10 in spelling, 92 in reading, 3 dictionaries, 30 in arithmetic, 18 in geography, 19 history, 14 in grammar, 6 in natural philosophy, 2 in chemistry, 2 in geometry, 2 in mental philosophy, 5 in astron-

omy, 5 in algebra, 3 in surveying, 1 in botany, 4 in book-keeping, 2 in rhetoric.

In 25 societies, the school visitors have recommended certain books to be used whenever new books are to be purchased, and in 33 societies a list of books has been adopted to the exclusion of all others.

The school houses are generally supplied with black-boards; and to some extent with globes; 992 of the former, and 46 of the latter being returned.

In 82 societies the official visitation of the schools was performed by a sub-committee of one or two persons, and in these societies the schools have been visited according to law, once near the opening of the school, and again near its close. From these societies the returns are generally more full, and are accompanied with suggestions which are evidently the result of much observation and reflection on the condition of the schools. Experience has shown that the business of school supervision faithfully performed, requires time, experience and intelligence, and that it will not be faithfully performed generally unless those who devote the time are compensated.

The extent to which parents visit the schools where their children attend, cannot be presented in a statistical summary. The practice varies in different societies, and more in different districts of the same society; but not in any district or society does the practice prevail to the extent which the prosperity of the schools require.

Taking the foregoing returns from 175 societies as the basis of an estimate for the forty-three societies (Document E,) from which no reports have been received, the following may be regarded as an approximation to the present condition of the Common Schools in the State.

Population in 1840,	309,978
Capital of School Fund,	\$2,070,055
Annual Dividend,	119,384
Number of towns,	144
“ school societies,	215
“ school districts,	1644
“ children over four and under sixteen years of age,	85,275
Average attendance of scholars of all ages in common schools in summer,	41,572
Average attendance of scholars of all ages in common schools in winter,	52,400
Estimated number who were four years and under, in summer schools,	1,600
Estimated number who were over sixteen years of age, in winter schools,	5,500

Number of scholars of all ages in private schools of different grades,	10,000
Number of children over four and under sixteen, in no school, public or private, in summer or winter,	8,000
Length of schools in summer and winter, in months, from	8 to 9
Teachers employed in summer—male,	149
“ “ “ female,	1,423
“ “ in winter—male,	1,300
“ “ “ female,	408
Monthly wages paid to teachers—male,	\$15 42
“ “ “ female,	\$6 86
Number of districts in which teachers board round,	1,500
“ “ “ board themselves	
or are boarded by district at one place,	145
Number of school districts unfurnished with school-houses,	50
Number of school-houses,	1,600
“ “ in very good condition,	100
“ “ good,	769
“ “ ordinary,	472
“ “ in bad condition,	232
“ “ very bad,	127
“ “ supplied with necessary out-buildings,	437
“ “ not supplied,	1,163
“ “ supplied with black-boards,	1,360
“ “ “ “ globes,	65

The following is a summary of the *defects* as presented by the school visitors, in the operation of our school system, and the *remedies* proposed by them, in their reports to the Superintendent ; extracts from which are hereto appended.

First—The apathy of parents and the public generally, as manifested in not visiting the schools, and attending school meetings, when school committees are to be appointed, and appropriations voted for teachers, school-houses, apparatus, &c.

The remedies proposed by them are—

1. A regular system of reports as to the condition of the schools and their improvement, both to the school society and the State, printed and circulated widely among parents and school officers.

2. Lectures and discussions by school officers and others, on topics connected with the method of instruction and discipline, school-houses, books, apparatus, and above all, the qualifications of a good teacher.

3. The circulation of Educational Tracts.

4. The publication of a Common School Journal.

Second—The employment of *cheap*, instead of well-qualified teachers.

To supply this want, the following remedies are by them proposed.

1. The establishment, by the State, of one or more Normal schools for the practical training of such young men and young women, as show the requisite native talent and tact, to the best methods of school government and instruction.

2. The holding of Teachers' Institutes or Conventions for one or two weeks in the spring and autumn, where young and inexperienced teachers may have an opportunity to review their studies, and receive practical instruction from older and experienced teachers.

3. An association of the teachers of a town or county, for an evening or a day, or a longer time, for discussions and lectures on topics relating to their profession.

4. A more thorough system of examination of all candidates to teach, by a senatorial district, or county Board of Examination.

5. A system of visitation, by a county or senatorial district board, and a faithful report, exposing poor teachers, and naming with commendation those teachers who are faithful and successful.

6. Higher wages.

Third—The constant change of teachers from summer to winter, and from winter to summer.

The remedies proposed by them are,

1. Higher compensation, to induce good teachers to remain in the same place.

2. A classification of the schools, so as to have occasion for a smaller number of male teachers in the higher department, and a larger number of female teachers in the primary schools, for the year round.

Fourth—The want of better school-rooms, and better out-door accommodations.

The remedies which they propose are,

1. An exposure, in faithful reports and lectures, of the injury done to the health, morals, manners and intellect of scholars and teachers, by the present neglect.

2. The erecting and fitting up of a few model school-houses, yards, &c. in each county.

Fifth—The want of uniformity of books.

The remedies proposed by them are,

1. The appointment of a state committee to examine all the books before the public, and recommend the best.

2. The appointment of a state committee to *prescribe* the best books, and make it the condition to the enjoyment of the public moneys, that these books and no others, shall be used in the schools.

3. The prescribing, by the school visitors, of such regulations as shall tend to a uniformity in all the schools of the same society.

Sixth—The irregular attendance of children at school.

The remedies they propose are,

1. The distribution of the moneys to the districts according to the amount of attendance in each, so as to make it the interest of parents and districts to see that the children are regular.

2. Securing the co-operation of parents.

Seventh—An unwillingness on the part of districts, school societies and towns, to raise money by tax for the compensation of teachers, payment of school visitors, and building and repairing of school-houses.

The remedies proposed are,

1. The agitation of the subject by lectures and reports.

2. The apportionment and payment of the dividends of the School fund to such societies and districts only, as will raise a specific sum by tax, and keep the schools in a school-house approved by the school visitors.

Eighth—The inability of small districts to maintain a good school-house, and employ a good teacher, for a sufficient length of time.

The remedies they propose are,

1. To assist the small districts by a larger distributive share of school money.

2. To abolish all small districts, where it can be done without serious inconvenience.

3. The more extensive employment, by such districts, of female teachers, in winter as well as in summer.

Ninth—The want of a more thorough system of supervision, that there may be a greater uniformity and vigor in carrying out the provisions of the School Act, in different districts; and a sense of responsibility to the Legislature, for the manner in which the large amount received from the State is expended.

The remedies they propose are,

1. The appointment of a Commissioner, whose sole business it shall be to visit schools, deliver addresses, confer with school committees, circulate information, furnish plans of school-houses, and submit a detailed report of the condition of the schools annually.

2. The establishment of a Board of Education, with a member for each County, and with power to appoint a Secretary, who shall devote his whole time to these duties.

3. The appointment of an officer for each County, or Senatorial district, to visit the schools within his limits, and report to the Legislature, or the State Superintendent.

4. The appointment of a single officer for each town or school society, to have the supervision of the schools in that town or society.

Tenth—The existence of numerous private schools of the same

grade of the common schools ; and of the patronage of the former by the educated and wealthy, to the neglect of the latter.

The remedies proposed by the visitors are,

1. To make the common school the best school.
2. To establish a common school of a higher order than the district school, in every town, and in every large village.

Eleventh—The want of suitable apparatus, and means of visible and practical illustration.

The remedies proposed are,

1. A small appropriation by the State to each district which will raise as much more, and expend both sums in the purchase of these articles.
2. Lectures on the advantage of such means of illustration.

Various other suggestions are scattered through these reports, which will be found deserving the consideration of all concerned in the local administration of the school system.

Extracts from the Reports of School Visitors.

SCHOOL-HOUSES.

There are only three good school-houses in the society ; only three that have any out-houses. The rest of the school-houses are in a miserable condition. One is thirty-five or forty years old. Most of them have only slab seats, with the legs sticking through, upwards, like hatchel-teeth, and high enough to keep the legs of the occupants swinging. They are as uncomfortable to little children as a pillory. Seats and desks are adorned with every embellishment that the ingenuity of professional whittlers can devise. (I suggest that every school be recommended to furnish a cord of whittling stuff, to save the desks and benches.) The floors rough and open, admitting the cold, while the stove, if heated enough to warm the whole room, would almost scorch those sitting nearest to it.

The seats are not only high and narrow, but have no backs and are exceedingly uncomfortable. The houses are badly located, by the side of the road, or on a small triangle formed by the junction of three roads. No play ground but the dirty street, and no shades but what the sheep or swine would find in similar circumstances. It is surprising that some men of character and wealth and standing, will send their children to a school kept in a house which is in far worse condition than the buildings in which they keep their cattle. In some cases the weather boards are falling off without, and the plaster within, so that the wind enjoys quite freely the luxury of coming in to be warmed by the fire, so that between the bleak nor-westers on the one hand, and the red hot stove on the other, the children suffer not a little with this fever and ague temperature.

In one district the past winter, the house was very open, the clap-boards falling and clattering in the wind, and the plaster not hindering the wind which the weather boards admitted, and the children were nearly all sick with colds ; almost every scholar was sick with

the lung fever; they were obliged to suspend the school for the want of pupils. The doctor's bills must have amounted to nearly enough to repair the school-house.

In not a few instances I have been able to look out from the school-house at other places beside the windows.

I do not know as any thing can be done to secure better houses, while the public money is given to be wasted in such places, and on those too heedless of its value to provide for its useful application.—*Ridgefield, Second School Society.*

Two of our school-houses, those in the two largest districts, are in a bad condition, old, unpainted and inconvenient. They are built and constructed *inside* on the old Connecticut plan. Only one row of desks, and that fastened to the wall of the school room, running quite around it; and long forms, without backs to rest on, the scholars sitting with their backs to the centre of the room. The other two are in better condition, though one is constructed on the same plan as above. The out-buildings are in bad condition, generally. One school-house has no out-building nor wood house. One school-house only is painted outside.—*Suffield Second School Society.*

Four of the school-houses are sufficiently roomy and comfortable; but they are injudiciously located, unpainted, and the seats, and writing desks are any thing and every thing except what they ought to be.

The remaining school-house, which is in district No. 1, the central, most populous and wealthy district in the society, and which enumerated fifty-two children between the ages of four and sixteen in August last, is a disgrace to any civilized community. Old, dilapidated and unsightly in appearance, with a turnpike in front and a highway in the rear; in short, it has but one redeeming quality, which is, that it is the most thoroughly ventilated of any school-house in the state. This you will infer, from the fact, that during the three and a half month's schooling the past winter, *eight cords* of wood were consumed in it. The out-houses compare well with the school-houses.

Our churches, court-houses and even our prisons, stand in most afflicting contrast with our district school-houses. The court-houses, planned and erected under the control of the leading men in the county, in which they spend but a few terms in the year, and the churches where the parents spend but a few hours in a week, are provided with every thing which can gratify taste or subserve comfort; but the school-houses, a large majority of them not only in this school society, but in the sixteen hundred school districts in this state, in which seventy thousand children, in the most susceptible period of their lives, spend from thirty to forty hours in a week for several months in a year, seem to be deserted by all public care, and abandoned to cheerlessness and dilapidation, and while ample provision is made by law whereby towns can be compelled to lay out, alter and repair highways, so that the traveling public may be accommodated, there is none made by which school districts can be compelled to provide suitable houses for children attending school.

The undersigned earnestly recommend that provision be made by law, whereby districts neglecting to furnish suitable school-houses, can be compelled to furnish the same. Let it be made the duty of the county commissioners, upon the petition of a certain number of inhabitants in any one district, to view the premises in person, to order such alterations and repairs; or the building of a new house if they deem it best; and let them be invested with full power to carry it into full effect, and to assess the costs and expense of such repairs, or building upon the inhabitants of the district.—*Pomfret Second School Society.*

Of the nine school-houses in this society, not one is really what they all ought to be, for the morals, health and intellectual improvement of the pupils. Four of them are considered tolerably good, having one out-building, the other five are hardly passable. The desks in most or all of them are where they never ought to be, against the sides of the room and against one end, and with few exceptions, all of a height, with poor accommodations for loose clothes, hats, &c.—all located on or near some highway; no play-ground attached to any of them, except the highway.—*East Haddam School Society.*

TEACHERS AND NORMAL SCHOOLS.

Many of the teachers are stupid, ignorant changlings, who teach school simply because they prefer that to chopping wood at the same price. The districts want the cheapest. The first question is, how *cheap* will you teach? The committee asks no more, but turns him over to the examining committee.

Here is one of these teachers from whom I received the following letter, *verbatim et literatim*, &c. In answer to a question which his letter does not begin to touch, he writes,

"The school district No. — The time that has binn taught for this winter past, is five monts, The number of schollars that has binn to this school is 24 in number, School district No ——" &c.

I did not examine that man, nor will I tell you who did license him, but there is something wrong when such a loggerhead is commissioned "to teach the young idea how to shoot"—it will shoot wrong.—*Ridgefield School Society.*

That there are defects, glaring and palpable, we think cannot be denied. The first we would mention, is the manner in which the public money is distributed to the districts. By the present method, a small district receives a mere pittance, inadequate to pay a teacher fitted for his business, the wages which he may command in a more favorable location. Such districts, seeing their neighbors enjoy a school without paying any thing for it, think themselves entitled to the same immunity. Though it is a fatal delusion, they think not of the consequences. They hire a teacher to compare with their share of the public funds; and when he is presented for examination, they beg that he may not be examined thoroughly, for fear he may not be qualified to receive a certificate of approbation. When such teachers are brought forward, we frequently hear the committee-man of

the district say, "He'll do well enough for us—our school is small—if he don't pass, we shall have to hire somebody else and pay him great wages." And in many cases, committees listen to these appeals, allowing the candidate to assume the important station of teacher, who is unqualified and had better be any where else than in a school-house.—*Brooklyn School Society*.

* Perhaps one of the greatest defects in our common school system is to be found in the fact, that we are almost entirely destitute of teachers who are qualified for this important work. It may be thought by you, gentlemen, that this is not correct; but we venture to say that if you could go through our country and visit our schools (as one of the committee has) you would become convinced of the fact; nay more, that in very many instances the money we receive was wasted completely.

You may ask, gentlemen, why we let such persons teach our schools? and the answer is plain, we can get no other, and we must have a school. And now for the remedy—and we can think of no plan so likely to succeed as to establish a school for teachers in every county in the State, where teachers could become in every sense *qualified* for the work.

It would at first, probably, need some aid from the state but if rightly conducted they would be able to support themselves in a short time. Something of this kind must be had if we wish our schools to flourish, for it cannot be expected that persons can teach that which they do not know. And we are not advancing. We ask you, gentlemen, to turn your attention to what is doing in the State of New York; see her Normal schools sending out her hundreds of young men, *qualified*, calculating, not like our country teachers, to get into a school house some three or four months in the winter to raise some of the *needful* and think no more about it till winter again, but teachers who are to make teaching their business. Look again to her district libraries, sending forth a vast amount of knowledge into many a family. See Massachusetts with her system of schools, and can it be said with truth, that they are not getting the start of us? and shall it so be said of "Old Connecticut," our state, the land of intelligence. Let us but get teachers into our schools who are fitted for every part of their important work and it would soon produce a new era in their existence. We have, gentlemen, deliberately come to the conclusion that if we had not as much public money as we now have, and each parent had to furnish an equal amount with that received from the state, we should not so often hear the complaint—"Our school has done us no good." "The money has been thrown away," when perhaps they have never visited the school, or know nothing about it only what their children tell them; but this is often *enough*.—*Litchfield School Society*.

The great difficulty with regard to teachers who have been employed in this society, is not that they were not qualified in point of literary attainments, for it has been the aim of the various boards of school visitors for years to elevate the standard of qualifications required of teachers, and they have also acted with a commendable

degree of independence in rejecting those who were not qualified ; but they are deficient in the best methods of instruction, and of communicating what they know. They have never been educated for the business ; different teachers having different systems.

The visitors cannot but express their conviction of the necessity of some institution under the care of the state, designed to prepare teachers for their arduous and responsible stations in our Common Schools.—*Abington School Society.*

The establishment of two or more Normal schools with model schools attached, and after a sufficient supply of teachers are thus provided, a requisition that none shall be employed but such as have received a certificate authenticated by a proper seal from the principal of a Normal school.—*Stonington School Society.*

PARENTAL AND PUBLIC INTEREST.

The great thing needed is a *deeper interest* in behalf of the subject pervading the mass of the community. Only let every parent in the state become suitably impressed with the magnitude and importance of this great work, and it would infuse new life into the whole system. District and school society meetings would be fully attended ; old and wretchedly bad school-houses would be supplanted by those that are new and good ; all the schools would be supplied with the necessary apparatus and libraries ; *good* teachers would be sought after and employed, rather than *cheap* ones ; short schools would be lengthened, and a general and punctual attendance of the scholars secured. Now legislation can do little more than prepare the framework ; it cannot breathe into it the breath of life ; nor give to its great heart those strong and powerful pulsations, which alone can send life and heat and vigor to its remotest extremities. He who shall devise a method by which to *galvanize* the torpid mass of the community on this subject, will become a benefactor of his race. The remedy needed is one that will strike at the seat of the disease. If the fountain be pure, the streams which flow from it will be pure. Could an *agent* of the *right stamp* be obtained to visit all our school societies, and lecture upon the subject, great good we believe would result from his labors. The establishment of Normal Schools, and Teacher's Institutes, would also be highly advantageous.—*Woodstock Third School Society.*

This indifference on the part of parents, is an evil of great magnitude. It indicates that a low estimate is put upon the value of our schools. No other business is so neglected, especially where *dollars and cents* are concerned. Every thing is placed above the school. Where there should be the most care and attention, there is the least. The visits of parents to the school, are calculated to assist the teacher, and enliven the scholar. When a youth finds that he is frequently brought under the parental eye in the school-house, by the constitution of our natures, we may expect that it will have a happy effect. It serves to restrain the turbulent, and encourage the well disposed.

One cause for this criminal neglect, we think may be traced to the

small expenditure of money which is now required, directly from the purse. The aim of a large majority of the districts, is, to make as much as possible of the public money. This, costing no labor or effort, a free gift, is counted of little value. They care little how it is expended, if they can get their schooling free. This is perhaps harsh judgment; but when we see how grudgingly a school tax is paid in very many instances, it certainly must be acknowledged to have some force. We believe that if each town was required to raise an equal amount, or a sum bearing a proportion to the public money, an increased interest would be at once manifested. This tax should be levied as is the town tax, on the polls and property.—*Brooklyn School Society.*

In our opinion, too much reliance is placed upon the school fund as the educator of the children. Parents give their children over into the hands of the State, to be educated, without giving themselves any, or very little concern about it, unless it be to keep the expenses within the limits of the receipts. Hence, we believe, their want of interest, and hence the employment of unqualified teachers. If the money were given to the districts on condition of their raising as much more, we think this difficulty might in part be remedied.—*Watertown School Society.*

The defects in the operation of the present Fund system, in this place, and in others in which we have been conversant with schools, for twenty-five years, appear to us as follows:—the result is often *no schools* in the small districts which need them most, the parents not having it generally in their power to sustain private instructors. And when the small districts sustain teachers, they feel obliged to sustain the very cheapest that can bear an examination. I remember a case when the candidate did not pass; and a plea was put in by the district committee, that they had but seventeen dollars, and if they could not have the candidate elect, (who offered to keep for nine dollars per month,) they should give up the hope of a school for the winter. Out of pity, he was indulged. This is exactly the operation in hundreds of cases similar. The result may not always be the same, but the *tendency* of the Fund, as it is now apportioned, is to lower down the instructors to the cheapest grade, because no others can be obtained by the funds allowed.

It seems in vain to say in Connecticut, that by the help of the Fund, the parents ought to be willing to add a sufficient sum to meet the demands; for the Fund *has*, in point of *fact*, taught the people to feel that their schools are to be sustained *without a TAX*. This habit of feeling is uncontrollable. The habit of feeling in Massachusetts is, that the common schools are to be amply supported by a direct tax. This is calculated upon as much as any other family expenditure, and in some cases is appreciated more highly than any other. And they have raised two dollars to a scholar more easily than we, in Connecticut, can now raise two York shillings per scholar. In Massachusetts, their tax enables them to have the *best of instructors* that good wages can ensure. Their schools are consequently much superior to ours.—*Prospect School Society.*

But a worse evil than this consists in the supineness and indifference which the people very generally manifest with regard to their schools, and which this feature of the present system tends to foster, if indeed it has not begotten it. The indifference of parents is astonishing. In society and district meetings you will seldom find any body but the officers and persons who are interested from other motives than a regard for education. The schools, year after year, go unexamined and unvisited by any except one or two appointed visitors, and it is mainly owing to the exertions of two or three individuals that they are in so good a condition as the present. Now if an amount of money were to be raised by tax equal to one third or quarter of the regular income, should we not be more likely to have superior instructors and more interested people. Men value most highly what costs them most, and that which costs nothing is little thought of. So it is with education. If the parents are obliged to pay little or nothing for the instruction of their children, they cannot be expected to be anxious as to the quantity or quality of that instruction. In some States the school societies or towns receive the benefit of the fund only on the condition that they add a certain amount to it themselves, and we presume but few question the wisdom of such a provision. It is unnecessary to enumerate the good results that would flow from a greater interest and activity among our people in behalf of the cause of education. Without these it is absolutely certain that no great progress can ever be made.—*Glastenbury School Society.*

The defects in our present school system are many, and are mainly attributable to a want of interest in parents and others who have the management of the schools. They have settled down into a state of apathy, from which it seems impossible to arouse them. They think they have done every thing that can be done when they have voted wood and hired the master at \$10 per month and "*board round.*" If a person speaks of defects in the school system and improvements in our common schools, he is eyed askance, and regarded as one who wants to get above the "*common schools.*" They are unwilling to do any thing further than the school fund does; consequently we have low wages and of course incompetent teachers, and frequent changes, that great bane of our school system.—*Granby School Society.*

BOOKS.

Another great evil is a destitution of books in the schools, particularly among the poor. Parents who furnish their children liberally are unwilling they should be annoyed by those who are not thus furnished, by sharing the use of their books with them, yet it seems necessary, unless the time of the destitute poor be entirely sacrificed. The law intending to remedy the evil has in this town entirely failed. We think if a portion of the school money were applied for this purpose it would benefit the schools much more than the entire appropriation of it to teachers' wages. The advantages of the plan would be the wholesale price—every scholar being furnished, a great saving of the teachers' time in providing temporarily for the destitute would be effected. A book from use becoming defective before worn out,

might be exchanged for another till the defaced or missing pages were passed ; besides, we think the books would last longer when the scholars use them as borrowed, than when they consider them their own, and the teachers would exert a more strict supervision. Similar plans have been adopted, we believe, with great success, in other places. Although we did in years past enjoy the reputation of having the most efficient common schools, I trust we are not too proud to avail ourselves of the improvements of our hitherto less favored sister states. We think the states of New York and Massachusetts are far in advance of us, and much benefit might be derived from an investigation of their systems.—*Norwalk School Society.*

Would it not be better for our schools to have the text books uniform throughout each school, each school society and the *entire State*? A public act, authorizing the general Superintendent to constitute a committee of teachers, or others from each county to examine all and report the best set of text books for the State, and compelling the schools to comply with such report, would, in our judgment, be preferable to the present law. Many advantages would occur under such an arrangement, 1st, The scholars would be supplied with the best books extant. 2d, The pupils would make greater advancement by having a uniformity in books ; and teachers would be familiar with them. 3d, The loss consequent upon frequent changes in books by the suggestion of different teachers, would be avoided, and lastly, the prices of books would be reduced to 33 per cent. or more, if publishers could know what Grammar or Geography would be in *general* use.—*Avon School Society.*

No rules have been prescribed respecting books. For a series of years, the visitors have paid no attention to this branch of their duty. The consequences have been disastrous. The various teachers have introduced books, to suit their varying tastes and judgments. Good, bad and indifferent books are, therefore, now used. Many are totally unfit for the purposes of education ; they are absolute hindrances to the progress of the scholar, and impose a heavy burden upon the teacher. Again, scholars removing from one district to another, carry their old books with them. This introduces confusion, very frequently rendering it impossible to classify the scholars, and in the process of time each scholar has his class-book, and is "solitary and alone."—*Brooklyn School Society.*

EXAMINATION OF TEACHERS.

* * * * * A great diversity of practice exists in different towns. In some, no teacher can obtain a certificate without the highest qualifications ; in others, the least qualifications which the law will admit of, will answer. Our present laws also require repeated examinations of the same teacher, when he or she takes charge of a different school. A much better plan, in my opinion, would be to have a *County Examiner*, who should have power to approve or reject those who should present themselves, and whose certificate should be a war-

rant to the person bearing it, to teach any where within the limit of the county, and for a longer period of time than one year, his conduct as teacher being subject to all the restrictions to which it now is. It is believed this plan would raise the qualifications of teachers. Should it be objected to on the score of expense, the person applying for a license to teach might be required to pay the examiner a suitable fee, to be regulated by law.—*Winchester School Society.*

The Business Agent of the Journal of the Rhode Island Institute of Instruction, will take this occasion to state, that the illness of the Editor, and other causes which he could not control, has interfered with the regular publication of the Journal, on the plan originally announced. Before bringing the volume to a close, there will be forwarded to each subscriber more than twice the amount of printed matter promised in the terms of subscription.

As soon as Mr. Barnard can superintend the printing of some documents connected with his Report, the regular numbers of the Journal not already sent, will be forwarded.

TWO more EXTRAS, at least, will be published, which will contain, among other articles by Rhode Island men, relating to education, a "*Lecture by the Hon. E. R. Potter, on the History of the English Language;*" and an "*Address by Rowland G. Hazard, Esq., on Public Schools.*"

The completion and publication of a Circular, by the Commissioner of Public Schools, announced in the last Extra Journal for April 1st, on the mode of proceeding in the organization of school districts, was arrested by his illness, till it was too late for circulation in the month of May. It will be published, at least so much of it as relates to the action of districts, after their organization, in another form.

RECEIPTS FOR THE JOURNAL.

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Providence, June 1, 1846.

T. C. HARTSHORN.